channels, consistently been urging the Pakistani Authorities to help in securing the release of hostages, since the group responsible for the abduction and hostage taking of the foreign nationals is based in, and operates out of that country, and is receiving active assistance from the Pakistani agencies for its activities in Jammu and Kashmir.

[English]

Religious Shrines in India and Pakistan

6138. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that India has decided that number of religious shrines in India which can be visited by Pakistani pilgrims will be increased;

(b) if so, whether Pakistan Government is likely to reciprocate this decision;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP) : (a) to (d) Government have stated their decision to increase the number of religious shrines which can be visited by Pakistani pilgrims. The visits to religious shrines in India/ Pakistan are governed by the bilateral Protocol on Visits to Religious Shrines signed between the two countries in 1974. Government will take up the matter regarding the increase in number of religious shrines with Pakistan under the bilateral Protocol.

[Translation]

Wages in Rural Areas

6139. PROF. PREM SINGH CHANDUMAJRA : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "A pathetic To Farm Labourers' published in the 'Pioneer' dated April 7, 1997;

(b) if so, whether there had been decrease in rural wages in the year 1994-95 and 1995-96 respectively inspite of the annual rate of growth being over 7 percent during the said year;

(c) if not, the estimate of the Government in this regard; and

(d) the estimate made by the Government in regard to the rural wages in the year 1996-97 ?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) As per the Economic Survey 1996-97 the real wages for unskilled agricultural labourer's increased steadily at 5.21% in 1992-93 and 5.61% in 1993-94 though they declined marginally in 1994-95 and 1995-96 by 0.50% and 0.69% respectively.

(d) The estimate of the real wages of agricultural labourers during 1996-97 has not been made so far. However, a statement indicating the available information on existing rates of Minimum wages in respect of unskilled category of agricultural Labourer is given in the attached statement.

Statement

Daily Rates of Minimum Wages For Agricultural Workers Fixed by Different States/UTs Under The Minimum-Wages Act, 1948

(As on 1.10.96)

Sl. No	State/UTs	Minimum wages for unskilled agricultural workers
1	2	3
1.	Andhra Pradesh	Rs. 30.00 to Rs. 36.50 p.d. (According to Zones) (12.2.96)
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	Rs. 21.00 to Rs. 23.00 p.d. (According to Areas) (1.11.90)
3.	Assam	Rs. 1134.00 p.m.* or Rs. 984.00 p.m. plus food, shelter and clothing (1.8.89)